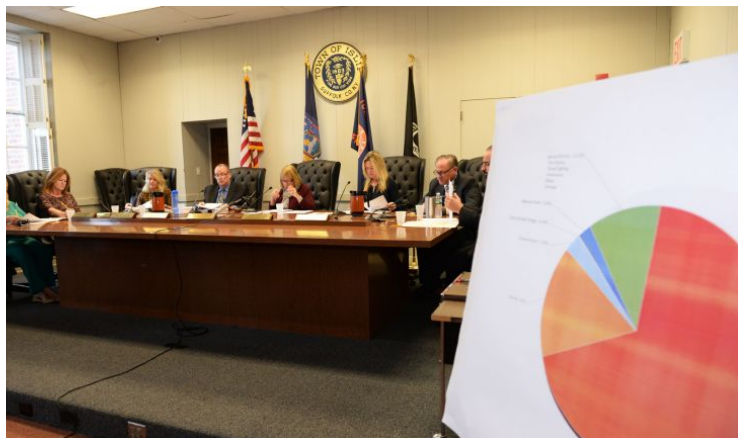


EXHIBIT D

LONG ISLAND / SUFFOLK

Islip Town Board approves \$234M budget that carries slight tax increase for homeowners

Comptroller stressed the 2019 "status quo" spending plan covers major services and doesn't pierce tax cap, but a resident criticized raises for the board and town supervisor.



In addition to the 2019 budget approved on Nov. 8, the Islip Town Board also passed a preliminary \$34.4 million capital budget. Photo Credit: Debbie Egan-Chin

By Antonio Planas and Rachelle Blidner

antonio.planas@newsday.com, rachelle.blidner@newsday.com

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The Islip Town Board voted 5-0 Thursday to pass a \$234.6 million 2019 budget that will increase homeowners' annual taxes by an average of \$28.

The board approved the budget — a \$5.8 million increase from the 2018 spending plan — after a public hearing at which only two residents spoke. The tax increase is based on an average assessed home value of \$400,000 with annual taxes of \$559, officials said.

Officials emphasized the increase will affect only the town portion of residents' property tax bills, of which about two-thirds goes toward funding schools and libraries.

The town's three main funds — the general, highway and town outside village funds — will increase 5.3 percent, to total \$143 million. Comptroller Joseph Ludwig said half that increase will be funded by reserves and other measures, not from taxes.

"That covers a predominant portion of all services that the residents get," he said. "It's our snow plowing. It's our road maintenance. It's our parks. It's our beaches. It's our pools. That's the number that went up 5.3 percent."

Ludwig stressed the increases stayed below the state-mandated tax cap.

"This is a very responsible budget," he said. "This is just a status-quo budget. We are not laying anybody off. We are not cutting services to any departments or the residents. But, unfortunately, we don't have the ability to grow and do new services that we would love to do."

Islip resident Greg Pepe chastised the board and Supervisor Angie Carpenter for approving pay raises for themselves while arguing residents will struggle with a bigger tax bill.

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"You're giving yourself a 2 percent raise and the rest of the board is going up, too," Pepe said. "You do that on the backs of taxpayers. You need money, but you're filling your own pockets."

While passing the budget, Carpenter and the board approved a 1.9 percent raise for the supervisor. Carpenter's salary is now \$106,337. Four council members, who are part-time employees, will receive pay bumps of 1.2 percent,

their pay rising to slightly more than \$80,000.

The town board also passed a preliminary \$34.4 million capital budget, which is smaller than 2018's \$36 million capital plan.

Carpenter called the tax increase "modest" and pointed to the fiscal responsibility of the town by noting its AAA bond rating. She also lauded the opening of the long-awaited pool at the Roberto Clemente Park and the significant improvements to the town's roads that had long-been ignored.

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